

IN THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

1. (Previously Presented) A computer implemented method for managing user status values in an instant messaging system, wherein the user status values indicate an availability to participate in an instant messaging session, the computer implemented method comprising:

receiving a first request from a second user to designate a do not disturb status that is associated with the second user such that a group of first users cannot initiate a new instant messaging session with the second user, wherein the group of first users comprises a buddy list of the second user;

receiving a second request from the second user to designate a subset of the group of first users such that the subset of the group of first users is authorized to initiate the new instant messaging session with the second user while a remainder of the group of first users cannot initiate the new instant messaging session with the second user;

the second user receiving a request from a first user of the group of first users to initiate the new instant messaging session with the second user;

determining whether the second user has designated the do not disturb status;

in response to determining that the second user has designated the do not disturb status, determining whether the first user of the group of first users is included in the subset of the group of first users;

in response to determining that the first user is not included in the subset of the group of first users, denying the request from the first user to initiate the new instant messaging session with the second user, and displaying a message to the first user that the new instant messaging session cannot be initiated; and

in response to determining that the first user is included in the subset of the group of first users, displaying chat session windows for the first user and the second user for initiating the new instant messaging session with the second user.

2-5. (Canceled)

6. (Previously Presented) A computer program product stored in a computer readable medium having computer usable program code for managing user status values in an instant messaging system, wherein the user status values indicate an availability to participate in an instant messaging session, the computer program product comprising:

means for receiving a first request from a second user to designate a do not disturb status that is associated with the second user such that a group of first users cannot initiate a new instant messaging session with the second user, wherein the group of first users comprises a buddy list of the second user;

means for receiving a second request from the second user to designate a subset of the group of first users such that the subset of the group of first users is authorized to initiate the new instant messaging session with the second user while a remainder of the group of first users cannot initiate the new instant messaging session with the second user;

means for the second user to receive a request from a first user of the group of first users to initiate the new instant messaging session with the second user;

means for determining whether the second user has designated the do not disturb status;

in response to determining that the second user has designated the do not disturb status, means for determining whether the first user of the group of first users is included in the subset of the group of first users;

in response to determining that the first user is not included in the subset of the group of first users, means for denying the request from the first user to initiate the new instant messaging session with the second user, and displaying a message to the first user that the new instant messaging session cannot be initiated; and

in response to determining that the first user is included in the subset of the group of first users, means for displaying chat session windows for the first user and the second user for initiating the new instant messaging session with the second user.

7-10. (Canceled)

11. (Previously Presented) A data processing system for managing user status values in an instant messaging system, wherein the user status values indicate an availability to participate in an instant messaging session, the data processing system comprising:

- a bus system;
- a storage device connected to the bus system, wherein the storage device includes a set of instructions; and
- a processing unit connected to the bus system, wherein the processing unit executes the set of instructions to receive a first request from a second user to designate a do not disturb status that is associated with the second user such that a group of first users cannot initiate a new instant messaging session with the second user, wherein the group of first users comprises a buddy list of the second user; receive a second request from the second user to designate a subset of the group of first users such that the subset of the group of first users is authorized to initiate the new instant messaging session with the second user while a remainder of the group of first users cannot initiate the new instant messaging session with the second user; receive, by the second user, a request from a first user of the group of first users to initiate the new instant messaging session with the second user; determine whether the second user has designated the do not disturb status; in response to determining that the second user has designated the do not disturb status, determine whether the first user of the group of first users is included in the subset of the group of first users; in response to determining that the first user is not included in the subset of the group of first users, deny the request from the first user to initiate the new instant messaging session with the second user, and display a message to the first user that the new instant messaging session cannot be initiated; and in response to determining that the first user is included in the subset of the group of first users, display chat session windows for the first user and the second user for initiating the new instant messaging session with the second user.

12-15. (Canceled)

16. (New) A computer implemented method for managing user status values in an instant messaging system, wherein the user status values indicate an availability to participate in an instant messaging session, the computer implemented method comprising:

receiving a first request from a second user to designate a do not disturb status that is associated with the second user such that a group of first users cannot initiate a new instant messaging session with the second user;

receiving a second request from the second user to designate a set of first users of the group of first users such that the set of first users is authorized to initiate the new instant messaging session with the second user while a remainder of the group of first users cannot initiate the new instant messaging session with the second user;

the second user receiving a request from a first user to initiate the new instant messaging session with the second user;

determining whether the second user has designated the do not disturb status;

in response to determining that the second user has designated the do not disturb status, determining whether the first user is included in the set of first users;

in response to determining that the first user is not included in the set of first users, denying the request from the first user to initiate the new instant messaging session with the second user; and

in response to determining that the first user is included in the set of first users, displaying a chat session window for the second user for initiating the new instant messaging session with the second user.

17. (New) The computer implemented method of claim 16, wherein the group of first users comprises all users except the second user.

18. (New) The computer implemented method of claim 16, further comprising:
the second user selecting the group of first users.

19. (New) The computer implemented method of claim 18, wherein the group of first users comprises a buddy list of the second user.

20. (New) The computer implemented method of claim 16, wherein the set of first users comprises a plurality of first users.

21. (New) A computer program product stored in a computer readable medium having computer usable program code for managing user status values in an instant messaging system, wherein the user status values indicate an availability to participate in an instant messaging session, the computer program product comprising:

instructions for receiving a first request from a second user to designate a do not disturb status that is associated with the second user such that a group of first users cannot initiate a new instant messaging session with the second user;

instructions for receiving a second request from the second user to designate a set of first users of the group of first users such that the set of first users is authorized to initiate the new instant messaging session with the second user while a remainder of the group of first users cannot initiate the new instant messaging session with the second user;

instructions for the second user to receive a request from a first user to initiate the new instant messaging session with the second user;

instructions for determining whether the second user has designated the do not disturb status;

in response to determining that the second user has designated the do not disturb status, instructions for determining whether the first user is included in the set of first users;

in response to determining that the first user is not included in the set of first users, instructions for denying the request from the first user to initiate the new instant messaging session with the second user; and

in response to determining that the first user is included in the set of first users, instructions for displaying a chat session window for the second user for initiating the new instant messaging session with the second user.

22. (New) The computer program product of claim 21, wherein the group of first users comprises all users except the second user.

23. (New) The computer program product of claim 21, further comprising: instructions for the second user to select the group of first users.

24. (New) The computer program product of claim 23, wherein the group of first users comprises a buddy list of the second user.

25. (New) The computer program product of claim 21, wherein the set of first users comprises a plurality of first users.

26. (New) A data processing system for managing user status values in an instant messaging system, wherein the user status values indicate an availability to participate in an instant messaging session, the data processing system comprising:

 a bus system;

 a storage device connected to the bus system, wherein the storage device includes a set of instructions; and

 a processing unit connected to the bus system, wherein the processing unit executes the set of instructions to receive a first request from a second user to designate a do not disturb status that is associated with the second user such that a group of first users cannot initiate a new instant messaging session with the second user; receive a second request from the second user to designate a set of first users of the group of first users such that the set of first users is authorized to initiate the new instant messaging session with the second user while a remainder of the group of first users cannot initiate the new instant messaging session with the second user; receive, by the second user, a request from a first user to initiate the new instant messaging session with the second user; determine whether the second user has designated the do not disturb status; in response to determining that the second user has designated the do not disturb status, determine whether the first user is included in the set of first users; in response to determining that the first user is not included in the set of first users, deny the request from the first user to initiate the new instant messaging session with the second user; and in response to determining that the first user is included in the set of first users, display a chat session window for the second user for initiating the new instant messaging session with the second user.

27. (New) The data processing system of claim 26, wherein the group of first users comprises all users except the second user.
28. (New) The data processing system of claim 26, and further comprising wherein the processing unit executes the set of instructions for the second user to select the group of first users.
29. (New) The data processing system of claim 28, wherein the group of first users comprises a buddy list of the second user.
30. (New) The data processing system of claim 26, wherein the set of first users comprises a plurality of first users.